US President's visit to India

1585. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether US Government have stated that visit of their President to India will take place only if India agrees to sign the CTBT;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government; and

(c) what are the views of Government on the signing of the CTBT?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) India's position on the CTBT was articulated by the Prime Minister in the UN General Assembly in September 1998 and in Parliament in December 1998. This was reiterated by the External Affairs Minister at the UN General Assembly in September 1999. The priority of our meeting the country's national security concerns having been addressed, the government believes that we now need to convey reassurance to the international community and, in this regard, desires to develop a national consensus. That remains the government's position.

Issuance of passports on Tatkal Basis

1586. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to issue passport on Tatkal basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the scheme will become effective; and

(c) whether Government would net additional revenue from this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Government is formulating a 'Tatkal Scheme' for issue of passports within seven working days submission of application. Under

the proposed scheme, for an additional fee, passports will be issued on an out-of-turn basis to eligible applicants who can be issued passports on post police verification basis provided such cases are recommended/certified by an officer not below the rank of Deputy Secretary. The Scheme would come into effect from the date of issue of the Gazette Notification which is in the process of being finalised.

(c) Yes, Sir. As it is proposed to charge an additional fee for the issue of passport under this scheme it would lead to some additional revenue to the Government.

Supply of missile by North Korea to Pak

1587. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that North Korea is providing Pakistan with a long range modern missile to Pakistan; and

(b) if so, whether relationship between North Korea and Pakistan is not detrimental to our interest?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) It is widely believed that North Korea has assisted Pakistan with liquid fuel long range missiles, missile technology and components and that the Chauri is a Pakistani version of the North Korean 'Nodong' missile. The government believes that continuing supply of sophisticated missiles and related technology to Pakistan poses a threat to India's security and is not conducive to maintenance of peace and stability in the region.

Creation of basic facilities for development and export of software

1588. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are making efforts on creation of basic facilities for development and export of software and contributes towards achieving export targets both for software and hardware; and

(b) if so, what is the progress made under this programme and the achievements made so far?